This Boy’s Life

AIDS activist’s biopic to premiere on MTV

January 1, 2009 By Kellee Terrell

When HIV-positive Pedro Zamora first heard that MTV was assembling a cast for the third season of its reality show *The Real World*, he wasn’t sure he should apply. Thankfully for us, his best friend talked him into it.

When *The Real World: San Francisco* debuted in June of 1994, the 22-year-old, bright-eyed Cuban-born American instantly became a household name and a much-needed mouthpiece for the AIDS epidemic in this country. And while he passed away only five months later, Zamora’s message left a cultural imprint on the world.

MTV and BMP Films celebrate his legacy in the new film, *Pedro*. Written by Dustin Lance Black (*Milk*) and starring Alex Loynaz and Justina Machado (*Six Feet Under*), the movie will air this spring. And it’s more relevant than ever: Almost 15 years after Zamora’s death, young people ages 13–29 make up 34 percent of all newly diagnosed HIV cases in the United States.

Nick Oceano, the movie’s director, hopes the film will give the newest MTV generation the same hope that Zamora gave him as a teenager. “He planted the seed for me to come out as gay and become an AIDS activist in the Latino community,” Oceano tells *POZ*. “If this film could save just one life, then it would all come full circle.”

The Legacy Continues…
POZ asks: How did Pedro Zamora inspire you?

Joe Norton, New York City
“He was one of my heroes, so I volunteer my time now, telling my story to get young people to protect themselves and have compassion for those of us living with HIV. I see why Pedro did it—being involved feels so good.”

Jeff Goodman, Santa Monica
“When I was diagnosed in the ’80s, denial and anger took over. Years later, seeing Pedro helped me deal with my issues, and I have become very open and public about my life.”

Anthony Raiola, Staten Island

“He humanized those living with HIV, especially to Latino communities. I can really relate to being public about my own HIV diagnosis and being gay because I am an HIV-testing counselor and activist. His work truly inspired me.”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/pedro-zamora-biopic-hiv-15869-8448